

Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SS-15 PM-03

INR-07 CIAE-00 PRS-01 NSC-05 /042 W

----- 123369

O 211117Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4520

INFO DIA WASHDC

S E C R E T BANGKOK 9291

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, SREF, CB, TH, US

SUBJECT: MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT: CAMBODIAN NAVAL HIJACKERS MUTINY
AND FLEE TO THAILAND

REF: A. STATE 118305

B. DAO BANGKOK IR 6 895 0274 75

C. FBIS BK 210141Z MAY 75

D. FBIS BK 201147Z MAY 75

BEGIN SUMMARY: WE RECOMMEND THAT IN REPLYING TO PRESS
QUERIES THE DEPARTMENT NOT GO BEYOND THE FACT THAT A KHMER
PATROL BOAT WITH TEN CREWMEN ON BOARD ARRIVED IN SATTAHIP,
PLUS THE INFORMATION THE DOD SPOKESMAN GAVE THE PRESS MAY
20. OUR INFORMATION ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF E-311 IN THE
MAYAGUEZ SEIZURE IS INCOMPLETE, UNVERIFIED,
AND CONFLICTING. FURTHERMORE, THE RTG IS SENSITIVE ABOUT
PUBLICIZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN E-311 AND THE MAYAGUEZ
INCIDENT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ROYAL THAI NAVY (RTN) ISSUED A STATEMENT MAY 20
THAT A KHMER PATROL CRAFT WITH TEN KHMER CREWMEN IS
ANCHORED AT SATTAHIP (REF D). ACCORDING TO "THE NATION"
OF MAY 21, AN RTN SOURCE WOULD NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY
THAT THIS VESSEL SEIZED THE MAYAGUEZ (REF C).

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2. REF B REPORTS THAT, ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, THE E-311 CREW FIRST ADMITTED PARTICIPATION IN THE MAYAGUEZ SEIZURE, BUT LATER DENIED IT DURING THE FORMAL RTN INTERROGATION. THIS SOURCE BELIEVES THAT THE CREW FEARS THE U.S. WILL DENY IT REFUGEE STATUS IF IT ADMITS PARTICIPATION IN THE MAYAGUEZ SEIZURE.

3. THE RTN FOREIGN LIAISON OFFICE TOLD THE DAO THAT THE E-311 CREW GAVE THE FOLLOWING PARTIAL ACCOUNT OF ITS MOVEMENTS:

MAY 9 - E-311 SAILED FROM REAM WITH 200 KHMER COMMUNIST TROOPS ON BOARD AND REMAINED OVERNIGHT AT KOH TANG.

MAY 10 - E-311 SAILED TO PUOLO PANJONG, WHERE IT DISCHARGED THE KC TROOPS AND REMAINED OVERNIGHT.

MAY 11-14 - E-311 CONDUCTED A BARRIER PATROL BETWEEN PUOLO PANJONG AND THE KOH TANG/RIEM AREA, SEIZING A NUMBER OF SMALL VESSELS. DURING THIS PERIOD E-311 OPERATED WITH THREE PCF'S.

4. WE ARE UNABLE TO VERIFY THE ABOVE INFORMATION. BOTH THE E-311 CREW AND THE RTN HAVE AN INTEREST IN DISTORTING AND OBSCURING THE FACTS. DAO HAS REQUESTED COPIES OF THE RTN INTERROGATION REPORTS AND DIRECT ACCESS TO THE E-311 CREW.

5. SINCE THE FACTS REMAIN OBSCURE AND THE RTG IS RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE E-311 IN THE MAYAGUEZ SEIZURE, WE RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT AVOID COMMENTING PUBLICLY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN E-311 AND THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT. THE GUIDANCE PROVIDED THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN (REF A) APPEARS TO CONFORM TO THIS RECOMMENDATION EXCEPT FOR THE FINAL ANSWER, WHICH WE THINK SHOULD REITERATE THE POINT THAT A CONNECTION BETWEEN E-311 AND THE MAYAGUEZ HAS NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED.

6. SINCE DAO IS IN THE BEST POSITION TO OBTAIN FURTHER INFO, REPORTING FROM BANGKOK ON E-311 WILL BE CENTRALIZED
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IN DAO, WHICH WILL, OF COURSE, OBTAIN CONCURRENCE FROM OTHER APPROPRIATE OFFICES IN THE EMBASSY. DEPARTMENT OF STATE WILL BE CARRIED AS INFO ADDRESSEE ON ALL MESSAGES THIS SUBJECT.
WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NNN

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